

The cable television industry already has an unfair anti-competitive ability to control both the content and the hardware that delivers the content to the consumers. Consumers are currently required to purchase proprietary equipment from the cable companies in order to access digital television services. By implementing this Digital Television Copyright Protection, the FCC will ensure that consumers are unable to perform time-shifting on their home computers. The fallout from this will install a defacto requirement for any consumers who seeks time-shifting capabilities to either purchase a TIVO and sign up for the monthly recurring fees, or to purchase more proprietary equipment from the cable television cartel. We are at a time in the history of home-electronics where the PC is being crafted to serve as the central processing hub (as evidenced by Windows Media Edition, Snapstream, etc...). The advantages of this are obvious: There will be no need for redundant and proprietary devices such as receivers, amplifiers, LCD displays, speaker systems, video recording devices, etc... which can save the American consumers thousands of dollars/family per 5-year period (average length of time that passes before a family upgrades their entertainment hardware). By implementing a non-compatible, proprietary standard for Digital Television in order to prevent recording onto a home computer, the FCC will undermine the future of the PC's role as the central processing hub for home entertainment. The consumer will be the one forced to shoulder the costs and the future costs that will result from a completely unnecessary, but forced, need to purchase additional equipment for the sole profit of the Digital Television Industry which the Consumers already subsidize through a combination of both direct monthly fees and in the form of taxes. The digital television industry wants nothing more than to control the hardware delivery devices through which their content is accessed. The FCC would be making a grave error to hand more control of the PC over to the entertainment industry. The consumers are not served by this Copyright Protection scheme, the consumers are hurt by this scheme -- both in the short term and in the long term.